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Editor Spalding's Official Base Ball Record and Spalding's Official
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Secretary of the New York National League Base Ball Club.

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GROUP I No. 202

HOW TO PLAY BASE BALL

NEW EDITION

Originally compiled by the late T. H. Murnane

REVISED BY

JOHN B. FOSTER

Editor Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide and
Spalding's Official Base Ball Record

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INTRODUCTION

In organizing base ball clubs and leagues, consider the following needs derived from practical experience:

First.—Care in the selection of players.

Second.—Individual and team training obtained by hard practice.

Third.—Harmony among contestants of individual teams and good physical condition.

Fourth.—A thorough study of opponents' methods.

Fifth.—Learning all plays and developing new ones.

Sixth.—Trying to teach a keen sense as to when to take a chance, and the right one.

Seventh.—Inculcating perseverance and courage.

Eighth.—Placing authority with sound leaders.

Ninth.—Insisting upon invariable courtesy to opponents and officials.

In selecting the different candidates for the positions of a ball team, pick a catcher who is as accurate in throwing from any position as he can be; a cool-headed man, who will note every move on the field, and one who will work well with his pitchers. It requires an intelligent man behind the bat, as the catcher is the one who must guide a great deal of the game. Right-hand throwers

are very essential and men who can stand hard work are preferred.

For pitchers, select men who field the position well and have good control of the ball when pitching. Pitchers come of all heights and weights. They must be excellent fielders as the game's development in the past fifteen years has made them essential infielders.

Select a tall, rangy player for first base, a man with a natural gift for taking pickups; a left-hand thrower is better than ordinary, as he is in position to throw to the other bases after picking up a grounder.

A medium-sized, well-built player for second base is a good selection.

For third base, a tall player with a good range and a strong arm, who can throw from any position, both overhand and underhand.

For shortstop an agile man who can get over ground quickly.

In the outfield good hitters and throwers; men who are fast runners preferred.

Individual training should consist of batting practice, bunting toward third and first, with both right- and left-hand pitchers in the box, and place hitting. Each player should practice base-running, and endeavor to evade being touched out when near a base.

On running to first base on a long drive to the outfield each player should turn first base on the run, and return when it is evident the ball has

been intercepted by the fielder. If fumbled, the runner should keep on to second. If the ball is thrown to first, move to second instead of trying to get back to first, as the ball will have to be handled perfectly to get the runner.

For field practice, bat to the outfielders, both at short range and with long flies. Most outfielders practice too little on ground balls, waiting to have the ball come to them, when the proper play is to go in and meet the grounder, keeping the ball well in front.

An aggressive team is more likely to win in Base Ball; hence the best batsmen step into the ball when pitched to them, while weak batsmen pull away from it.

Development of team playing takes continual practice and a natural leader. Where batting is light, base-runners take long chances; where the score is close they take long chances. When in the lead it pays to be conservative, but when making an uphill fight, opportunities should be pushed to the batting. Base-running, however, must be played more as a certainty. The catcher must be the judge of when the opposing base-runner may take a chance, and work with his pitcher. The pitcher must try to call the turn when a batsman intends to bunt to help the base-runner. The first baseman should know this as well in order to be ready to make a play to the other bases. The shortstop and second baseman should "size up" the batsman and runner when out for the hit-and-run game and be careful not to leave an opening.

Third base is the most difficult position on a ball field in many respects. One must run in for bunts and back for hard drives. The third baseman should take every grounder on which he can get his hands and must be equally sure with either hand. Wide grounders to his left must be picked up on the run with one hand. Bunts must be thrown with the same hand as picked them up.

It is the duty of the captain and manager of a team to study the work of each opponent, and discuss their observations with the other members of the team, mapping out a line of defense and also a line of attack.

A bunting team can sometimes be stopped by bringing the third baseman forward, thereby forcing the batsman to hit out. In this case the shortstop should play well towards third, in a deep field, to get the hard drives that may pass a third baseman playing close in to stop bunting.

The shortstop should make a point of covering third when the third baseman goes in for a ground ball. The second baseman should make a point of covering first base when the first baseman goes in for a slow grounder, as the pitcher will very often be unable to get to the base, although he should always try to do so. Covering first and third bases by the second baseman and shortstop have grown to be very important plays in the winning of games.

No play requires any more expeditious action than throwing to second base by the third baseman when looking for a force-out and often a

double play. Throw sharp, but with a medium speed, so the ball can be handled for a second throw. Remarkable accuracy in this style of throwing has made famous third basemen extremely valuable to their teams.

Outfielders may receive a sign from the pitcher as to how the ball is to be delivered to the batsman. A strong outfield can make it very unpleasant for the heavy hitters. A small percentage of players are place hitters, that is, men who really know where the ball may go when they meet it.

Where one run may win a game, with a runner on second, it pays to bring the outfield in close, to make a possible out at the plate should the batsman hit a grounder to the outfield; all balls thrown to the home plate from the outfield should go on a bound, so the catcher can block his man as well as handle the ball.

Many games are won after two men are out in the ninth. *Never quit until the last man is out.* A team with a reputation for playing to the finish will always worry its opponents, while a team looked on as "quitters" will be beaten. When behind, keep working hard with the hope that luck will turn, and your opportunity come before the day is over. The winning ball player must be a man of courage and filled with the spirit of victory, even after many defeats.

There is not a team game known to man where luck plays as many pranks as in base ball. The fierce drive may go into the fielder's mitt, while

the scratch hit will drop safe just over the heads of the infielder. In base ball you can force your luck by taking long chances and making unlooked-for plays. Great ball players should never make a false move to win the most important game, and usually the great players are the cleanest kind of workmen.

Nagging the umpire is a losing game, and the player who treats the official with the most consideration is sure to be thought of the most highly.

THE ART OF PITCHING

It is the ambition of almost all ball players to be able to pitch a curve ball, and few great players have passed up a chance to become regular pitchers of their teams. There is a fascination about delivering a ball to a batsman, and working a batsman is a fine art which is to be learned after obtaining command of curves.

A pitcher who always covers first base when the ball is hit in that direction practically becomes a tenth man for his team, as he allows the first baseman to make running stops well to his right, and come in at full speed, knowing that the pitcher will cover the base for the throw.

Two preliminary motions are necessary for a pitcher: The free, offhand swing, to loosen out and get freedom before sending the ball to the plate, when there is no one at first or second base, and the short, snappy move, made in delivering the ball, with men on the bases.

The pitcher without a free, open action will soon tire and lose interest in his work, while the pitcher who can bring to bear the different parts of the body and go along with little effort will prove a stayer.

Curve pitching was discovered and controlled for the first time on Jarvis Field, Cambridge, by Arthur Cummings, a Brooklyn amateur, in 1867,

who proved that a ball sent spinning through the air would be finally turned from a direct course. Pitchers have discovered other curves and shoots. Perhaps no one man has mastered all the curves, and for this reason it is well to note what the different pitchers have to say about their styles since becoming successful.

Tim Keefe was famous years ago, when a member of the original New York Giants, with a peculiar slow ball that no pitcher has been able to get since. Keefe held the ball well back in the hand and controlled the ball with the heel of his thumb, not allowing the fingers to touch the ball. It seemed utterly impossible to control a ball in this manner, but Keefe did, and could hit a bullseye nine times out of ten. It was a slow ball with a drop curve and started with a fast preliminary motion.

Bobby Mathews in 1872 was the first to introduce a perfect raise ball. The raise used by McBride about the same time was the result of sending the ball by an underhand throw from close to the ground. Mathews made the ball spin like a top and come to a stop before rising as it neared the batsman.

The raise was introduced by Harry McCormick with the Syracuse Stars of 1876. About this time Nichols of the New Haven club was pitching a most tantalizing drop ball. Later Rhines came along with the only upcurve ever pitched and subsequently McGinnity used a raise ball. Mathews,

Rhines and McGinnity are the only men ever known to get the proper effect on this style of delivery. A fast ball with a jump was claimed by several pitchers, but worked by Charley Nichols while with Boston to better advantage than ever before.

Charley Sweeney introduced the inshoot while with Providence in 1884. The drop curve has been effectively used by scores.

The following advice by well-known pitchers is well worth considering:

Mathewson: "No pitcher with a good assortment of curves should be required to play in more than two games a week. A great amount of tissue is broken down in the arm that does the work during the course of a game, and it takes time to re-build it."

Perritt: "A pitcher should always keep on the lookout for a batter's weakness, for some fellows can kill one ball and are easy for another. The ones hardest to pitch to are those who hug the plate and chop at a ball instead of swinging. Batters who stand back and swing hard are no trouble for a pitcher who keeps his eyes open to what is going on."

Phillippe: "Learn the weaknesses of opposing batsmen and pitch accordingly. The successful pitcher knows exactly what the men who face him cannot hit, and either pitches those balls to them or else tempts them with the kind they like, but

keeps the latter so far from the plate that they cannot hit them safely, if at all."

Orth: "I early recognized the fact that if I desired to remain in the game I would have to resort to something different from throwing curves all the time. I soon found out that if I had the ability to send the balls where I wanted to that I would make the needed progress in acquiring the art of effectiveness, and command therefore became my long suit from that time. 'Aim to put them where you want to.' That is my advice to young pitchers. Study your batsman. Do not make the mistake of trying to fool batsmen who will not hit unless you put them over. You just waste your strength on such. These men are good waiters and will just play for a base on balls from a wild pitcher."

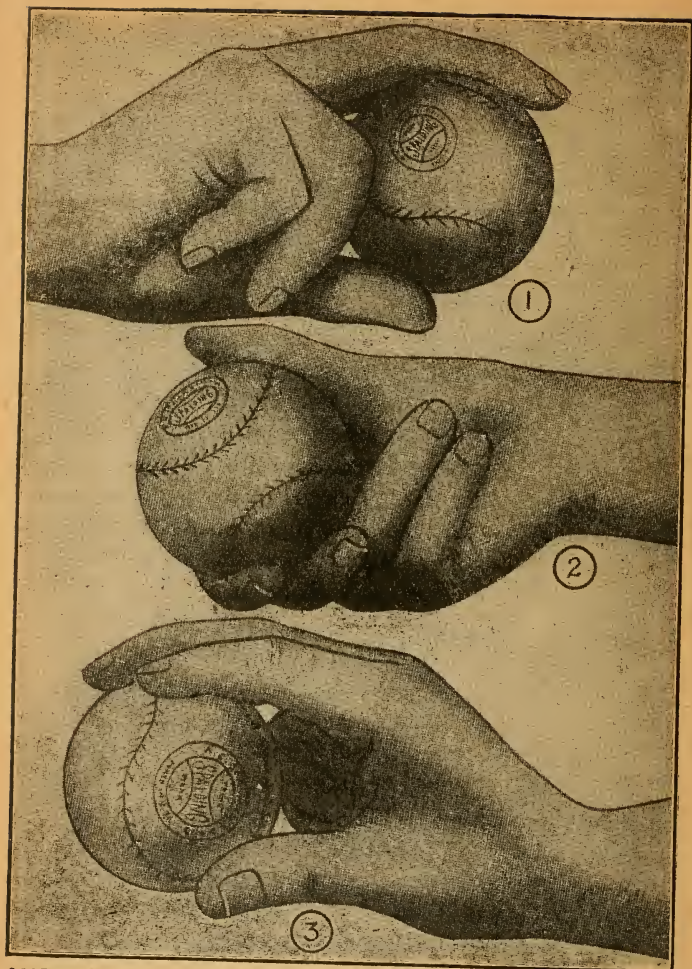
Alexander: "The pitcher must have strength and endurance far beyond what is required of the other players. I think it a fair inference that the larger man is more likely to have the advantage in this respect. It is true there have been many notable lightweight pitchers, but how long did they last? Can the records of 'Bobby' Mathews or 'Brownie' Foreman be compared with that of 'Cy' Young? As a matter of fact, Mathews, the most famous lightweight pitcher in the history of the game, stood only fifty feet from the plate, while the pitcher of to-day must send the ball sixty feet. I venture the assertion that if Mathews were

at his best to-day he would not last a week in any league."

Mathewson: "For the 'fadeaway,' the ball is held very loosely at the tips of the fingers, the first two fingers being above the ball and the thumb below it. The arms are thrown high above the head, but when the pitching arm begins to start the ball on its way the arm is brought out from the side of the body and raised to an angle of about 45 degrees. This motion is gone through so quickly, however, that it is practically impossible for the batsman to detect the fact that he is going to get something very different from a drop curve. In the drop curve the arm descends straight down in front, but in the fadeaway the motion of the arm from its position at an angle of 45 degrees is a small outward swing. When the arm gets in front of the pitcher, just about on the level with his chin, the hand is given a sharp twist inward, or to the left, which brings the back of the hand on top, and the loosely held ball, which is revolving from the rapid action of the arm, slips out sideways or off the second finger. At the same time there is a rotary motion given to the hand. When the ball leaves the hand the arm is so twisted that the palm of the hand faces outward."

Mathewson is the only pitcher who ever used the "fadeaway" ball, and pitchers have tried in vain to master this curve for many years.

This is how Mathewson pitched the drop curve ball. "To deliver this ball the arms must be



MATHEWSON'S "FADEAWAY"—No. 1 shows how ball is grasped for start of the "Fadeaway." No. 2 shows the ball leaving the hand as it gets the final twist of the wrist for the "Fadeaway." No. 3 shows how the ball is held to pitch Matty's slow ball. For the "Fadeaway" the ball is held lightly with the forefingers and thumb, and a slow twist is given to it. When mixed in with a speedy straight or in-ball it causes the batter to often strike at it before it reaches him. It is a "teaser" for the third strike.

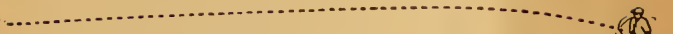
thrown high above the head," he says. "As the pitching arm rapidly descends straight forward the arm is turned slightly outward, and when the arm is horizontal the hand is turned slightly outward and the snap, a hard one, is given by the wrist, and the greater the snap the faster will be the curve.

"In holding the ball the first two fingers are above it and the thumb below. The ball is held rather loosely. When the twist or snap of the wrist takes place at the moment of delivery the hand turns so that the thumb is on top of the ball and the first two fingers below it. A full arm swing is used. The body is bent far forward so that all the weight of the body is behind the ball, and as the arm descends with a mighty swing the weight of the body is shifted from right foot to the left.

"As can be well guessed, such a ball is a great strain on the muscles of the arm when delivered with all the power a pitcher possesses. Like all curves the ball can be used at varying speeds. When men are not on bases it is a fine ball to pitch if it is desired to make the batter send out a grounder that can be easily fielded. In fact, any curve can be used fast or slow with this purpose in view.

"By not bringing the ball quite so high above the shoulder when starting to make the throw an outdrop can be attained. I seldom considered it necessary, however, to try the outdrop."

CURVES.



Vertical Direction to Either Right or Left Hand Batter—The Drop.



Vertical Direction to Either Right or Left Hand Batter—The Raise.



Vertical Direction to Either Right or Left Hand Batter.

Twisting as it dropped; never used successfully except by Mathewson.

CURVES.

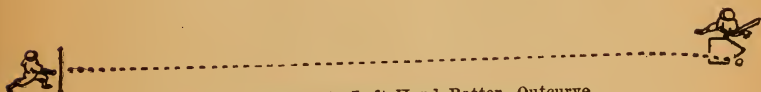


Lateral Direction to Right Hand Batter—Outcurve.

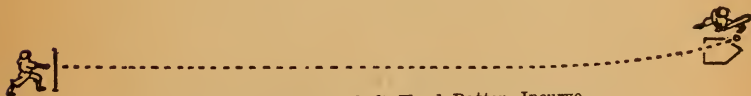


Lateral Direction to Right Hand Batter—Incurve.

So-called "incurve" is really a shoot.



Lateral Direction to Left Hand Batter—Outcurve.



Lateral Direction to Left Hand Batter—Incurve.

The "incurve" is usually more pronounced than to right hand batters.

The above diagrams and explanations are based on the curves as thrown by a right hand pitcher; with a left hand pitcher, the reverse will be the case.

Walsh: "In using the spitball, wetting the ball where the two first fingers rest on it has the effect of making the ball leave the fingers first and the thumb last. You know, when you pick up a ball to throw it you usually grasp it firmly with the two first fingers and thumb. If the ball is dry it naturally leaves the thumb first and the fingers last. But when you wet the ball in one spot it has a tendency to deflect the course, and the ball leaves the fingers first, passing over the thumb last."

Rudolph says: "To pitch an outcurve, hold the ball tightly between the two first fingers and thumb, and swing the arm well out, snapping the wrist to make the ball spin as much as possible while turning the palm down."

Brown: "The drop ball is the most trying one on the arm. I hold the ball between the two first fingers and thumb, and start the ball from as high a position as I can get, letting the ball slip off the index finger, while turning the palm of the hand down. By a double motion or snap of the elbow and wrist, I get the combination of drop and curve together."

Dineen: "A drop outcurve I found the most effective ball against right-handed batsmen; I held the ball the same for every ball I pitched, but allowed the drop ball to leave from the top of the second finger after bringing the hand down from the highest position I could get in a long swing, and, by an extra move to effect the curve, got the drop curve, which I think is the most trying ball

a pitcher can deliver. The drop, itself, is not so difficult, but the combination of drop curve requires a long reach and the gift of being competent to work all the curves and shoots."

Cy Young: "The jump ball can be produced only by great speed. The ball is thrown with a full arm swing right from the shoulder, and out from under the fingers, which are straightened out as the ball leaves for the bat. The idea is to get a jump on the ball just as it comes to the plate, nearly shoulder high."

Chesbro: "The spit ball is worked entirely by the thumb. Excepting the spit ball, every ball that goes from the pitcher leaves the fingers last. In throwing curves the fingers do the work. By wetting the ball it leaves the fingers first, and the thumb last, and the spit ball could be rightly called a thumb ball."

Plank: "I study the batsman in every way; his position in the box, his general attitude, the way he holds his bat and any other individual characteristic he may have. These help the experienced pitcher to get a line on what may be the best ball to use. If he knows the batsman well, that may be of some use, but not necessarily so. A young pitcher entering a new league cannot know the batsmen like an old-timer, yet he must make good from the start to hold his position. He must depend entirely on what he can learn on the instant from the batters as they take their places in turn before him and the ability he has to make

use of this information. A good catcher is a big help. He is right at the plate and can see the batsman better than the pitcher, and ought to know just what ball is likely to be most effective. I generally give my catcher the kind of ball he signs for, but use my own judgment as to how high or how near the batter to put it. I try to some extent to work corners—that is, to get the ball over, but keep away from the center of the plate—but when the batter is badly puzzled, or 'faded,' as we say, it is almost perfectly safe to put it anywhere so it goes over."

THE CATCHING DEPARTMENT

Catchers should have a long reach and be quick and accurate throwers from any position in which they may happen to be when the ball is received.

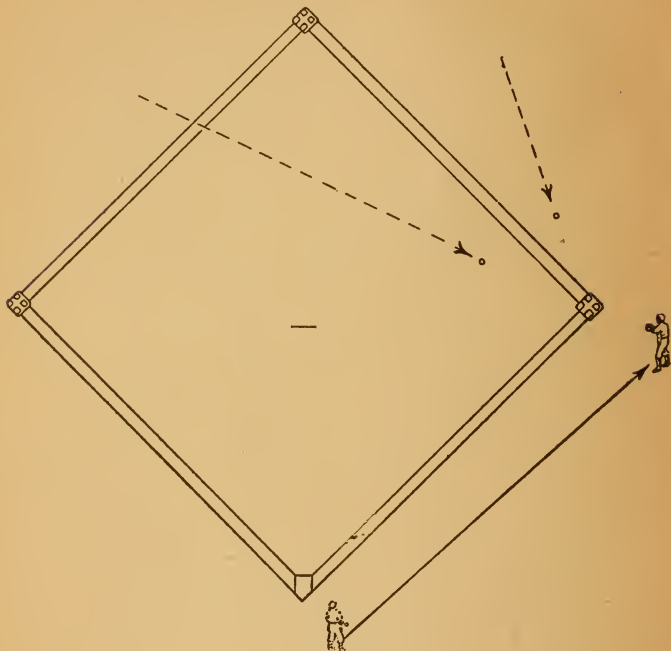
Without first-class catching no team has a good chance. A weak catcher makes base-stealing easy.

Catchers should have signs with both first and third basemen and should snap the ball to those points when the runners are taking ground freely. Lou Criger, of the Boston Americans, was a fine catcher. He said: "A catcher who cannot throw swiftly and accurately to the bases is of little use. He is called upon mostly to throw to second base, and it is on this point of the diamond that he should cultivate his eye for distance and force.

"One of the most spectacular features of a game is the attempt of a base-runner to steal second.

"The catcher should have an understanding with his pitcher on what to expect when a runner reaches first base. If the base-runner is known for his stealing propensities and is likely to run, the catcher should signal for a wide ball. There must be no preliminary motion in the catcher's movements in his act of getting the ball away. It should be one continuous action from the instant the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. The throwing arm goes back with the ball and is hurled to the base without delay. The throw should be low and close to the base so that the second baseman can

CATCHER SHOULD BACK UP FIRST BASEMAN ON
LONG THROWS FROM OUTFIELD.



Dotted arrow lines indicate direction of ball. In the above diagram catcher is shown backing up a throw from the left fielder. On a throw from center field (as indicated by the shorter dotted arrow line) he would take up a position in line with the ball but not as far, of course, as was necessary when the ball was thrown from left field, as indicated above.

put the ball on the runner with the least trouble. To get runners off third base and first base, the catcher should use a snap throw, in which the wrist develops its greatest power, as the play must be made with all the deception possible. It is a dangerous habit to throw to the bases indiscriminately and a habit that should be avoided.

“Oftentimes a pitcher’s effectiveness is due to the good support that he receives from his catcher, who can by his ease and poise behind the plate influence the temperament of his boxman.

“A catcher should make the reception of the ball look easy and not fight it.

“A catcher cannot be awkward and cover his position satisfactorily, as he has much to do in his territory which must be accomplished at quick notice. In going after foul flies back of the plate he must get the direction of the ball as if by intuition and turn instantly, ridding himself of his mask, and be ready to take the ball, in any position.”

A PLAY THAT OFTEN CONFUSES

A play that sometimes arises in a game is the source of much trouble each season. Nine times out of ten the catcher is undecided as to what he should do. It relates to the failure to touch the home plate. Failure to touch first, second or third by a base-runner never makes a confusing play, because the infielder knows all that is necessary for him to do is to get the ball in his possession and then touch the

base missed; also appeal to the umpire for a verdict. The last part is seldom necessary, because the umpire, if he has seen the play, immediately calls the runner out the moment the infielder goes through with his part of it.

In the game in question, with a runner on first and third, the double steal was attempted. The catcher threw the ball to second and the throw was cut off by the second baseman, who hurried it back to the plate, in order to get the runner scoring from third. The ball was handled perfectly, and it was apparent that the runner would be an easy out, unless the unexpected happened. The odds were about ten to one against him as he started his run for the plate. The catcher at that time had the ball waiting for him. This was all very evident to him, so he slid wide of the plate, hoping that he might possibly miss being touched by the catcher, and then be able to touch the plate before the catcher could turn and get him.

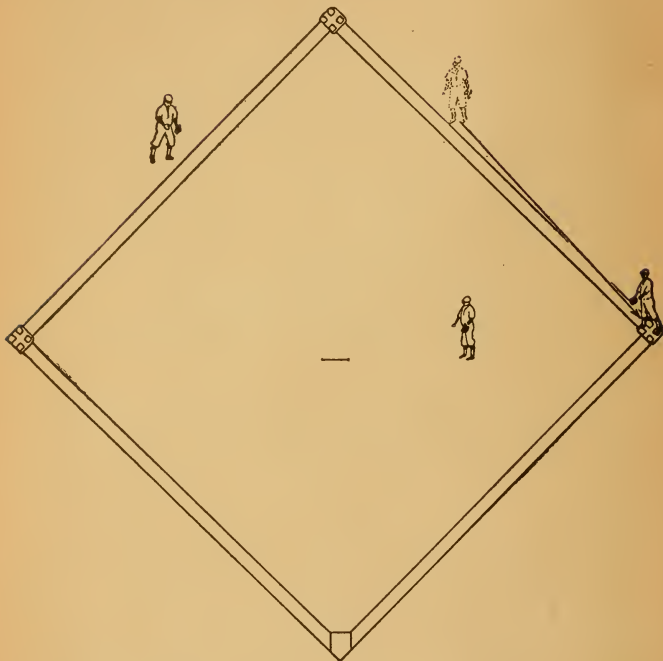
Part of the play worked as the runner had hoped it would. The catcher failed to touch him as he slid wide of the plate. The catcher, however, didn't give the runner a chance to touch the plate, because he quickly wheeled around and made it impossible. The runner regained his feet, and stood still about three or four feet away from the plate. The catcher stepped out to touch him, and as he did so the runner started toward his bench. The catcher followed him perhaps a half dozen steps. In the meantime the umpire had

called the runner out, but the catcher was taking no chances; he continued to pursue the runner.

The runner on first had, of course, reached second in safety. Noticing that the catcher was chasing the other runner around the field, he decided to make a try for third. The yells of his team mates finally reached the ears of the catcher, who stopped the chase before he had touched the runner, and made a hurried throw to third to get the runner coming up from second. He failed to do so. The moment the catcher threw the ball, the runner originally on third ran back and touched the plate. The team at bat claimed a run, but, of course, the umpire refused to allow it, stating that he had called the runner out the moment he started for the bench to avoid being touched.

If a runner who fails to touch the plate continues on his way to his bench, there is no reason in the world why the catcher should be forced to touch him with the ball to complete the out. All he need do is touch the plate, as he would any other base. The fact that the home plate is the final goal of the runner is perhaps what causes confusion. If a player slides past the plate without touching it, he has a perfect right to try to touch the plate before the catcher touches him with the ball, if he can do so. He has the same right at the plate as any other base, but if he fails to do so, and then continues on his way to the bench, the mere touching of the plate by the catcher with the ball in his possession is all that is necessary.

SECOND BASEMAN'S PLAY ON BUNT TOWARD
FIRST BASE.



Second baseman (original position indicated by dotted figure) runs over and covers first base if first baseman fields ball. This gives pitcher a chance to guard toward third.

THE INFIELD OF A BALL TEAM

A tall, active man is often selected for first base. Many medium-sized players play a clever first base. A man six feet in height has an advantage if his reach is good.

On ground balls the smaller man is better, and for second base a player may be under five feet ten, about five feet seven being the ideal height for a second baseman.

The shortstop also may be a medium-sized player, not over five feet ten, while the third baseman should be tall. The running plays at short and second base require great speed in action and a small man has a chance to change positions easier while under full speed, although Lajoie and Wagner, two phenomenal players, were exceptions to the rule.

The first baseman must be able to field a ball well and must play the ball on the run. He should run in for every slow ball that goes to the left of the pitcher, while the pitcher covers first base. The first baseman has a better chance to handle the ball as he is coming in, while the pitcher would be handicapped by trying to take the ball as he is bent down and running. The first baseman should go to his right for every ball that he can handle. In all such cases the pitcher or second baseman

should cover first base and the shortstop go to second base.

The catching of a thrown ball is about the simplest work a first baseman has to perform these days.

Short, snappy underhand throwing is the proper thing for a player covering first base, and constant throwing of the ball after a catch will improve the speed of a player's work when the time comes for real action.

A second baseman should be able to throw both overhand and underhand as well as toss the ball both forward and backhand, especially to second base, on a force play; in fact, many plays are made by scooping the ball on the dead run and landing it in the proper place.

Shortstop is in a measure second base over again, as the shortstop must take throws and often play well into the third baseman's territory for left-handed hitters and in deep field for place hitters, so that the shortstop and second baseman must work together like a machine.

The third baseman should play on the baseline for all batsmen, keeping an eye out for the bunter and must guess the play as the batsman gets ready to meet the ball. He must field nine-tenths of the bunt hits on the run with one hand, and throw accurately to first. A third baseman should go for the ground balls hit to his left, regardless of the shortstop, playing the wide ones mostly with the left hand and changing for the throw to first.

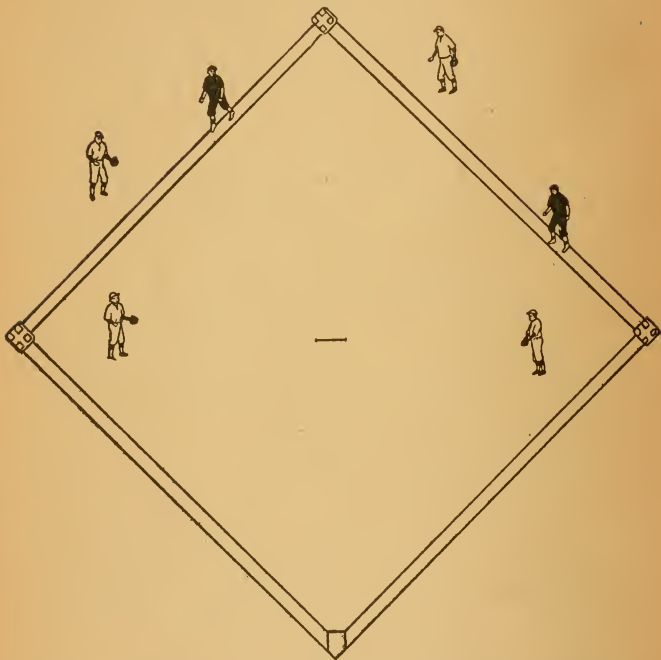
Throwing to second for a force-out requires quick thought and accuracy, as the ball must be given to the man covering the bag in such a way that he can swing and shoot it to first for a double play. It is not necessary to throw hard, but the ball should be on the way the instant it is picked up, with the knowledge that the base will be covered for the play.

With a man at second figuring on a steal of third the shortstop should play rather close to the base and hold his man. This he must also do with a third baseman looking for a bunt. A slow man at second will handicap the man who is trying to sacrifice, as the second baseman will hold his man close to the bag, with the idea of having the ball fielded to third base for a force-out. With a clever catcher the basemen can often get men off the bases at important stages of the game.

Judgment should be exercised in playing close for the man at the plate. It often pays to let one man go and cut off what might develop into a bunch of runs for your opponent. For example, with the score 2 to 0 and the game well over it would be the proper play to let the run score and play for the batsman. There are times, too, when a double play would be the thing, and with a slow runner at the bat it would be a fair chance to take.

The following advice by well-known professionals is well worth repeating:

DEFENSE AGAINST BUNTING.

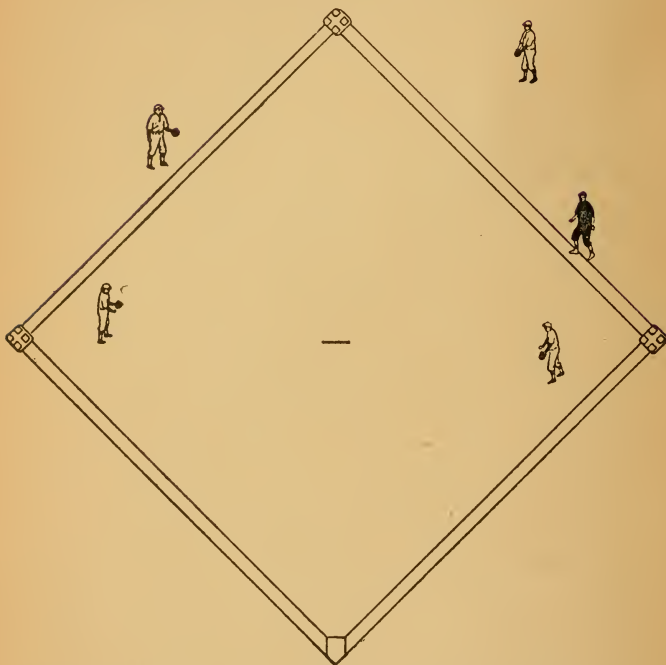


Showing approximate positions of infield players when a bunt is expected and runners on first and second bases.

Herzog: "Except pitcher and catcher, no player on the field handles the ball so often in a game as the second baseman. In only a small proportion of the number of times he gets the ball are there opportunities for making a put-out or an assist, but there is always a chance to make a costly error. He must, therefore, never relax his vigilance or lose his grip of the situation. He must work in perfect harmony with the other men in the infield, and especially with the shortstop. To do this, he must make an intelligent study of his fellow players and be thoroughly familiar with their capabilities and their peculiarities. When a fast play is started there is no time for explanations either by word or sign, and every man who takes part in it must know as well what the others will do as what he will do himself, and be governed accordingly. The number of possible plays on the ball field is not extraordinarily large, but the number of ways of making them is almost infinite.

"It follows, then, that the second baseman must at least be as fast on his feet and as quick a player as any other player. Besides having a knowledge of his fellow players, he must be acquainted with his opponents so as to resort to the style of play most successful against them. Tricks which will work against one team fall flat when tried on another, and the way in which any play should be made must be decided by the circumstances of the moment.

DEFENSE AGAINST BUNTING.



Showing approximate positions of infield players when a bunt is expected and runner on first base only.

“Suppose, for example, there is a man on third and the ball is hit to me, but in such a way that I am obliged to run for it, either forward or sideways. If two men are not out, I should try, the ball being a ground hit, to catch the man at the plate, if there is a possible chance. Suppose, also, that the man who hit the ball is very fast, I must watch the ball, so as to be sure to get it, and, as I cannot watch the runners too, must make up my mind before I get it where I will throw it. To do the right thing, I must know how fast the runner at third is and how much of a lead he had when the ball was hit. I must consider how long it will take to get the ball to the catcher and how skillful the latter is in blocking off base-runners in a pinch. The standing of the score by the time must be weighed. If the scoring of a run by the opposition insures their winning the game, the play at the plate is the only one worth trying, whether there appears to be a chance of success or not. But if the game is young and I was sure the man at third would score, I would not hesitate to make sure of the man at first. The shortstop must back up third base as the second baseman backs up first, play short left and middle field, and sometimes go out into foul ground for flies that neither the third baseman nor the left fielder can get under. He must guard second base when that duty falls to him, help the pitcher to keep base-runners hugging the sack and watch the returns of the ball from the catcher to the pitcher. He must make the same

close study of opposing batsmen and the base-runners that other players must make, and be guided by what he can learn. He cannot pick out a level spot and stand there all afternoon expecting the ball to come to him. Like the business man who wants trade, he must get out after it and change his position for every man who comes to bat.

“While there is nothing certain about anything in Base Ball, random infield work is as bad as random pitching. The infielder should never make a move that does not mean something and represent a definite end. He should adopt the course dictated by his best judgment and then follow it out until there is a reason for making a change. He will not always be successful, but he must not be discouraged if the unexpected happens.

“One of the problems for the third baseman is the batter who can both lay the ball down and line it out. If he plays back too far the batter will invariably bunt. If he gets too far in, he is likely to have to face a hard drive, which will sorely test his courage first, and probably his endurance afterward. In the course of a season every third baseman makes a number of fine stops which would not have been made if he could have gotten his body out of the way in time. The best plan to pursue in such cases, in my opinion, is to take a middle course. Keep back close to the line running from second to third and six or eight feet from the foul line, the latter depending to some extent both on the batter and the pitcher. Then, every time the

pitcher delivers the ball, get on your tiptoes and be prepared to move instantly in any direction. Keep your eye on the batter, and if he is going to bunt you can discover his intention in time to be half way in to the plate, if you are fast on your feet, before the ball leaves his bat. If, on the other hand, you see he is about to swing hard on the ball, you can summon your powers of resisting the shock of a speedy drive.

“All this sounds, perhaps, as if third base were the only position in the field and that all balls are knocked to the third baseman. That is exactly my idea of how every player should feel during the game. He should always be expecting the ball to hit him, always be ready to receive it, and always have his mind made up as to what he will do with it when it does come.

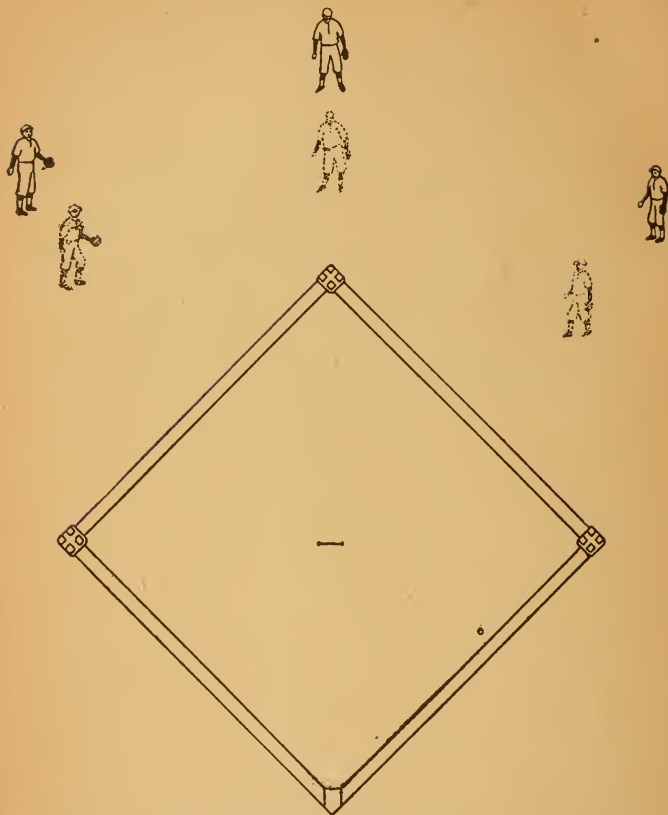
“Besides the foregoing, the third baseman must be able to line the ball across the field swiftly and accurately. With the fast men of to-day ‘arching’ the ball over won’t do. It must go on a line, and no time can be wasted in starting it. Like the first baseman, the third baseman has a large number of foul flies to look after, and to get them, as he should, fleetness of foot is indispensable. He must also know what to do with the ball after it is caught, and not let base-runners take advantage of such plays to advance. He should back up other positions whenever possible and never overlook an opportunity to do anything that will benefit his team.

“Two faults many young infielders (and some old ones, too) have are trying to throw the ball before they get it and losing their heads after making an error. The first is due to nervousness or over-anxiety, and requires constant effort and perhaps some coaching to overcome. Whatever effort is needed, this must be done, for nothing so interferes with heady, successful work as nervousness. As to errors, they are inseparable from infield work. If the field were a floor, the bound of every ground ball could be determined exactly and the play be made with machine-like precision. As it is, a pebble, a tuft of grass or an inequality in the ground deflects the ball just when you are set for it, and it comes just where you were not expecting it and don't want it. You do your best to get it and often succeed, only to make a bad throw, because you are thrown out of position by the extra effort and the time is too short to take a brace before throwing. At other times you either miss the ball altogether or are unable to move your hand fast enough to do more than knock it down, and, as a result, get an error for what appeared to all but yourself an easy chance. The infielder must never let such things affect him. He must forget them as soon as they are past and go on as if nothing had happened. Go after everything, no matter how impossible it seems to you as well as everybody else. Once in a while it will take a lucky bound into your hand, and if you don't let your surprise prevent you from taking advantage of the

circumstances, you will probably be hailed as 'the greatest ever'—until you make your next error.

“Neither the manager nor the captain can win unless they have the co-operation of the players. To be successful the captain's efforts must at all times be reinforced and backed up by a good bunch of hustlers. He must infuse into his men, if they do not have it naturally, enthusiasm for their work and a do-or-die spirit. Lots of good players are naturally very quiet. They know what to do themselves, but cannot direct others not so well posted. Such men must be encouraged and advantage taken of their special abilities. The captain must welcome their aid and show that he appreciates it.”

PLAYING THE OUTFIELD.



Three rear figures indicate the usual positions of left, center and right fielders; the inner line of lighter figures indicates where outfielders would move, approximately, when playing to catch a runner at plate with one out and tie score threatened.

PLAYING THE OUTFIELD

No weak batsman should be worked in the outfield if it can be avoided.

Fielders should work with signs and know just what the pitcher is to give the batsman, as this will enable them to be on the move in the right direction and often make catches that seem impossible when the ball is hit. Outfielders should never hold the ball a second, but send it to the infield at once and give no chance to the base-runner to take advantage of slow work.

Outfielders should practice taking the ball in a position to throw, and learn how to turn after taking a ball after a long run.

Outfielders should study the different batsmen closely. They should pay no attention to the other players, who should simply back up the man who first called out.

The center fielder must be ready to back up second base whenever possible, and the right fielder must be ready to back up first base every time a throw is made to that sack from any of the infielders or from the catcher. The left fielder must watch third base.

There is a great chance for the young man who is a quick thrower to make a reputation for himself in right field. Many opportunities come to the right fielder to make unusual throws. Many a

fast base-runner has been thrown out at first base on what seemed a base-hit to right field.

That was accomplished because the right fielder was alert and ready to dash in to meet the ground ball as close to the base lines as possible.

The right fielder, like the center fielder and the left fielder, should be an excellent judge of all batters. After seeing a man bat several times he should know whether he is likely to hit in his direction.

The center fielder and the right fielder should have a signal fixed with the second baseman so that individual may be able to tell which one of the players is to take a fly that falls between them. Collisions may thus be avoided.

When the second baseman calls out the name of the outfielder who is to take the fly the other should stop on the instant.

The outfielder should never go into a game without practicing in his position. This is so he may become familiar with the grounds and with the direction and velocity of the wind. The wind is an important factor in all outfield playing. Unless the outfielder knows how it is blowing he is likely to be fooled badly the first time some batter knocks a fly toward him.

Quick starting has much to do with success in getting to the ball. In order to be able to start quickly the outfielder must have a judgment so keen that it will tell him almost the square inch where the ball will fall.

THE FINE ART OF BATTING

Batting is the one department of base ball where a boy or man must have natural talent to make good. The old saying that "batsmen are born and not made" is very nearly correct, although any player can improve by faithful practice and intelligent thought.

Each player will have his own style at the plate, finding it easy to fall into some style unconsciously. He should be allowed to continue in this style unless there should be a semblance of pulling away from the plate.

It is a rare thing nowadays to see any man, except possibly the battery players, draw away from the plate. Once a pitcher notes this weakness, he will soon end the batter's personal usefulness.

The preliminary swing of the pitcher is often likely to bother the timid batsman, for he will lose track of the ball. The batsman should pay little attention to the pitcher until about the last move before sending the ball to the plate, when, being alert and in a natural position, he can follow the course of the ball.

All players can bat to better advantage while gripping the bat short.

All pitchers try to get a line on the batsman by noting their footwork and general attitude at the plate.



TYRUS R. COBB,
Detroit,
Leading Batsman, American League, 1918.

Conlon, Photo.

Lajoie says: "Know your pitchers and keep close tab on the position of the fielders. Give the runner on first base his signal for a steal, and then aim to hit the ball through the shortstop's or second baseman's position, according as the one or the other left it open to cover the bag and catch the runner.

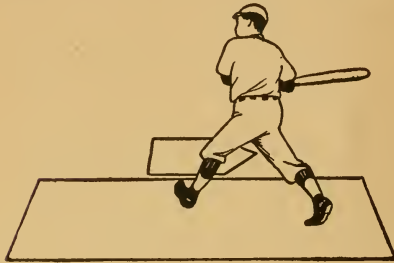
"For that very reason I rarely or never seek to run forward past the plate and meet the ball before the curve breaks. By playing as far back of the plate as possible I get that much more time to be sure which infielder is going to cover second base.

"Being able to place the ball in the various out-fields helps a whole lot, for the fielders then are puzzled where to lay for you."

Beaumont was deemed one of the most scientific batsmen in the profession. Read what he said about getting out of form:

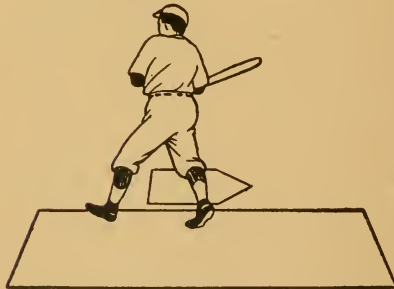
"Good batters are often asked why it is that they occasionally have slumps during which they go for days without hitting safely. All of them meet with this experience at times. In my own case, which I suppose is largely the same with other players, the trouble comes from what we call getting out of stride. In hitting the ball, all good batters take a step forward. This step is called the stride. My stride is about eighteen inches. Suppose I unconsciously increase this stride to two feet. This looks like a small matter, but in reality the additional six inches causes me to lower my bat a trifle, with

SPEEDY AND SLOW DELIVERIES.
How Batters Should Play for Either.



SPEED.

Stepping Forward.



SLOW.

“Crowding” line and stepping into curve,
if one is pitched.

the result that I hit under the center of the ball, which sends it up in the air instead of out on a line as I intend. The eye has nothing to do with this. It is simply a habit which comes on the player before he is aware that he has contracted it. The remedy lies not in trying to accustom yourself to the new stride, for that you probably could never do successfully, but in getting back your old step. Constant practice is the only means of doing this, and it has sometimes taken me three weeks to overcome the trouble."

Some good batsmen never take any preliminary swing, depending wholly on footwork, while a number of batsmen take the bat at the extreme end and take a long swing, usually cutting a triangle before swinging for the coming-in ball. Nothing is more graceful, but the timing of the swing must be absolutely perfect to win, and a clever pitcher will be quick to see his advantage.

Don't be afraid of the pitcher. It is easy to avoid being hit by a fast one and slow ones never injure.

McGraw to the young player: "Don't get in the habit of planting your feet on the ground and not moving them until you have swung at the ball. Get a stride and advance a little toward the ball as you hit. Do not step too far and accustom your eyes and hands to the change such a step makes. Learn to hit squarely every ball that passes over any part of the plate between the knee and shoulder, and devote the most practice to what you are weakest

GRIPPING THE BAT.



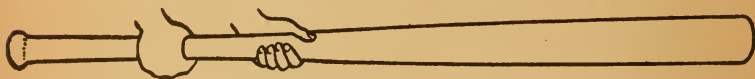
Keeler style—Almost at center (Keeler was a left hand batter). Grasping the bat so far down the handle is technically known as “choking” the bat.



Lajoie style—Hands at extreme end.



McGraw style—Hands short distance from ends.



Burkett style—Space between hands (Burkett was a left hand batter).

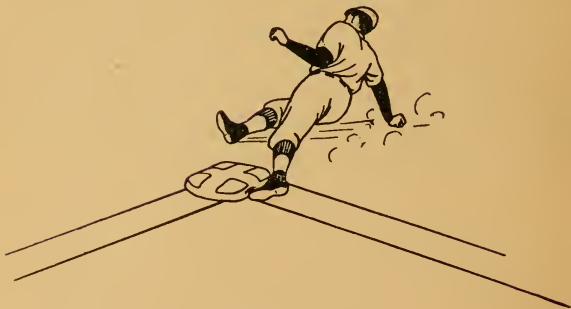
on. Learn to think and act quickly and to keep your head at all times. In a contest, do not always do the same thing under the same circumstances. Give your opponent a surprise whenever possible."

Always go to the plate to meet the ball in the center, no matter who the pitcher may be, for all can be found, as they must get the ball over that one piece of rubber.

When facing a pitcher who depends mainly on speed, stand at the back of the batter's box, so as to have the advantage of the additional distance, particularly if it is desired to hit toward third base. But if the same pitcher has a good drop ball, stand at the front of the box, so as to be able to catch the ball before the break.

SLIDING TO BASE.

THE HOOK.



In sliding, the body is flung outside of base line and back of second, one foot only touching the bag—"hooking" it—thus offering as little surface as possible for the baseman to touch the runner.

THE ART OF BASE-RUNNING

Headwork counts just as much as fleetness of foot after a player reaches first base, and nothing will bother a pitcher any more than to know a clever man is ever ready to start a break for an extra base. It bothers the pitcher much more than the man at bat, and for this reason pitchers usually pitch their poorest games against a team of fine base-runners.

Once a player reaches first base it should be his aim to keep the pitcher and catcher guessing as to what move he intends to make. Taking a lead off first should be the study of every ball player, and no man can expect to bother the pitcher or ever steal a base if he has failed to improve his many opportunities to take the proper lead off the bases, for this means everything, as a good start means success in making a play in the field. Every player should be taught the fundamental principles of base-running, including sliding to bases, as well as getting to the base from a distance of several feet.

Players should practice starts from early spring and at other times when the opportunity affords. There is no danger of being caught off the bases while the pitcher stands with the ball in his left hand when he pitches with his right. A running lead and quick return under these conditions will

bother the fielding team and in the general mixup the runner is more apt to get the proper lead for second. Even if the runner never intends to steal, he may keep his opponents' attention off the man at bat, to the advantage of the latter.

Taking two bases on a ground hit to right or to center field can be accomplished three out of four times if the runner is on the alert against the outfielders.

When running the bases the player must observe the next baseman as to the way he stands, and which way he may turn. There is a way of twisting the body when going into the bag that brings the runner in feet first. Many times the ball is there as soon as the runner, but when the baseman is ready to tag the runner, that body twist will get the latter out of danger.

Let a good base-runner get to first base at a critical juncture, and if the previous proceedings have been dull and lifeless, action is at once instilled into the game. The pitcher becomes anxious. A good base-runner will bother him and handicap him in his work. The pitcher will often work harder for the man on the base than he will for the batter, giving the latter a big advantage. The catcher knows the slightest slip he may make will be taken advantage of, and the infielders know that they will have to work fast and sure to stop the runner, and at the same time be prepared to handle infield hits.

All this excites the spectators to a high pitch of enthusiasm and causes them to watch every play with strict attention. The spectacular features of base-running always have been recognized.

Men like those famous old-timers, Stovey, Welsh, Ewing, Latham, Ward, Fogarty and Kelly, never knew what it was to stand anchored on the initial bag and wait for a bunt or a hit-and-run signal. For them there was a moment's jockeying along the line, a sharp skirmish of wits and quickness with the pitcher and first baseman, and then a streak of light going down to second, a slide, a cloud of dust, and a frantic yell from the delighted crowd.

"The big mitt stopped the runners," asserts a former well-known big league catcher. How? Get a glove of the type used by catchers up to 1889, get a modern padded mitten, have somebody throw a ball and it will all dawn upon you in a second. When the old pitchers, throwing from short distance and yet hurling them across with all their steam, sent them into the thin-palmed, finger-tipped glove of those days, the catcher always and instinctively drew back his hands as the bullet struck into the frail protection. Suppose a base-runner was under way, the catcher disengaged the ball from the glove and shot it down as fast as he knew how. After the big mitt was permitted, the whole method of taking the pitch changed.

"The catcher soon found that he could take the full shock of the fastest delivery in the great paw

and did not have to draw back his hands. What did this mean to the base-runner and to the catcher's chance of trapping him! Only this—that the catcher, able to get the ball out of the big glove and ready for the throw in speedier time than when he wore the little glove, had just that much margin on the runner. And bases are made or lost by fractions of a second.”

The player on second should give the runner on first the sign that he intends to steal. This will enable the man on first to prepare for a double steal. It is practically impossible to make a double play in this case,

With one man out it is sometimes good policy to take chances in stealing third base, though, as it has already been pointed out, before attempting to steal, the player should be certain of a good start. If successful, he could then score on a long fly to the outfield.

In a close game, where hitting is light, a player should take more than ordinary chances on the bases. A wild throw or a dropped ball by a baseman will give the runner the opportunity he may be watching for.

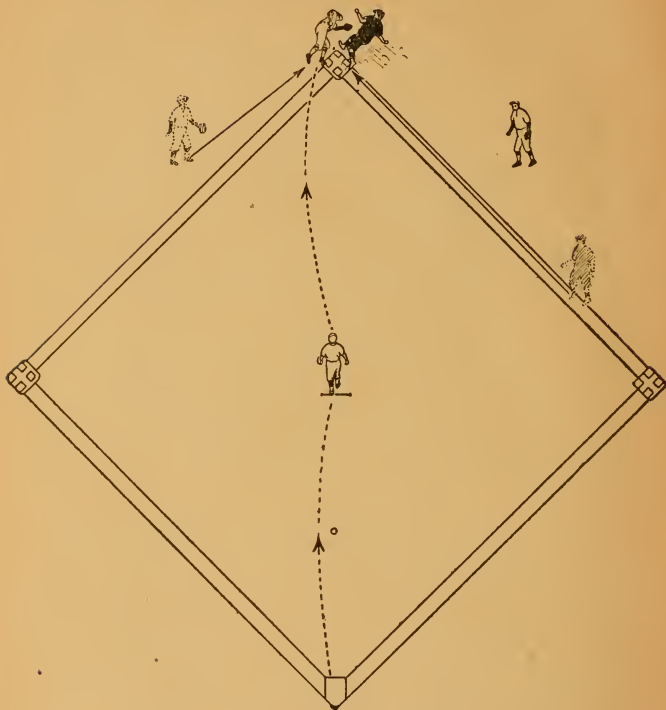
There is nothing that will discourage one team and please another more than dumb base-running. It is far better to hold the base until batted around than to run the bases without judgment.

As an example of this is a play that took place in one of the games for the world's championship at Chicago in 1906. A White Sox runner was on

third base, with one out, when the batter drove a fierce liner to deep right center, of which the outfielder made a clever catch and threw home in time to get the runner at the plate. Thinking the ball was hit safely, the runner had started for home. Seeing that the ball was caught, he returned to third, touched the base, and again started for home, to be disposed of. When he saw the ball hit to the outfield he should have returned with all haste to the base and been ready to start for home the instant the ball hit the fielder's hands. Had the ball been safe it was an easy matter to come in. If the ball was muffed it was also an easy matter. While if the ball was caught he could have beaten the throw home. Therefore, by dumb base-running, he lost one run and displayed the poorest kind of base ball.

There never was a good excuse offered for running another base-runner down. The base-runner must keep his eyes open, and look ahead. Some ordinary runners become expert base-runners by using good judgment, while some of the finest sprinters, lacking the temperament, fall easy prey to their opponents, especially to clever catchers, and are noted for their dumb work on the base paths.

THE DELAYED STEAL.

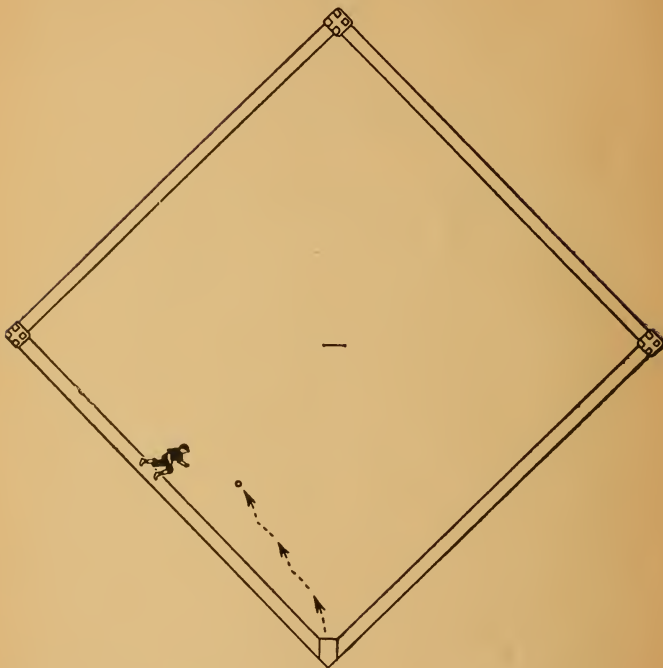


The base-runner, who had taken a good lead off first base (his original position is indicated by the lighter figure), started with the return of the ball by the catcher to the pitcher and caught both shortstop and second baseman napping. As will be seen, the shortstop finally covered second on the relayed throw by the pitcher, but too late to tag the runner, who managed to make the base with the aid of the hook slide. With a runner on base, the catcher should always make a quick return of the ball to the pitcher.

THE DELAYED STEAL

The delayed steal is used by good runners. Ever on the alert, the runner takes the limit of ground off first. A throw to first starts him off for second, where he beats the throw five times out of six. Again, the runner will hold his ground until the catcher has started the ball back to the pitcher, when he darts for second. As the second baseman and shortstop play wide and deep, it is a race for the base, with the pitcher hesitating as to who will take the ball, with the chances all in favor of the runner landing safely. This play is also tried—and successfully—with a man on third, the runner making home as the ball is thrown to second base. The delay in starting is sure to throw off the men who are picked to take the ball and while the basemen size up the situation the base-runners make ground on either or both ends of the play.

THE SQUEEZE PLAY.



Runner must start as ball is bunted—on a previously arranged signal, of course—otherwise play is almost impossible. The theory of play is—with one out—to tie the score. Dotted line shows the irregular course of the ball as it bounces along the ground; runner, who has taken as good a lead as a clever pitcher and a watchful third baseman had permitted, is shown making an effort to score.

THE SQUEEZE PLAY

This is a play which is very questionable as to efficiency.

The play is tried only with one out and a man at third base. The base-runner starts for home with the first preliminary swing of the pitcher's arm and tries for the plate, just as if making a steal. The batsman is supposed to meet the ball without any attempt for a hard drive, simply keeping the ball on the ground. If the ball is placed anywhere in fair territory there is little chance to get the runner going home; in fact, runners often score when the ball is pitched too wide for the batsman to meet it. Then the catcher is apt to drop the ball in his hurry. The play is seldom attempted unless the batsman is a good bunter. Then, too, it is not a good thing to try the play when the pitcher is laying for you, as he will keep the ball high and close to the batsman and nip the man coming home.

In close-score games the play is sometimes considered.

THE ART OF THROWING

A left-hand thrower is handicapped for most of the infield and should not attempt to play outside first base and the outfield.

There was a time not long ago when overhand throwing was considered the proper style to cultivate. Now a player must be fit to throw underhand, and even toss the ball backhand, as well as to scoop the ball when there is no time for getting into a position to make a throw.

When making a proper throw the hand should follow the ball. Snap throwing is a rare accomplishment and must be cultivated, while shoulder throwing is a big handicap to a ball player, as he is sure to lose time. The wrist, elbow and shoulder can all be used in making the ideal throw. The wrist and elbow properly developed will produce the best getaway throw, and should be practiced, particularly by outfielders.

Left-hand throwing outfielders are impossibilities when forced to use the shoulder to get the ball away. It is a case of "winding up," to see the base-runners beating the throw nine out of ten times.

In the outfield the players should practice continually to get the ball away, allowing the infielders to make plays from shorter distances.

A clever man will swing into position to receive a ball before making a hard throw. No man can throw hard and accurately without taking a step forward before letting the ball go. One of the finest throwers in base ball was a young player with a lame shoulder who developed a wrist throw that was marvelous for speed and accuracy.

Edward Crane, the greatest thrower for long distance the game has produced, never used his shoulder, when making a throw. In fact, the long distance throwers have never been what is known as shoulder throwers. About the only fine throwing catchers who used the shoulder have been Charley Bennett and Lou Criger, while the great catchers, Kling, Kelly, Ewing, Snyder, Sullivan, Clapp, Bergen and other good ones, were wrist throwers and hurried the ball away like a flash.

THE USE OF SIGNALS

It would be impossible to play up-to-date base ball without a variety of signals, well understood by each member of the team.

It was only a few years ago when the battery alone used signals; now every man on the team should know the style of ball the pitcher is about to deliver, and whether it will go close to the batsman or a little wide of the player. The fielders will then have a chance to be on the move in the right direction nine times out of ten—a winning percentage. Charley Snyder was one of the cleverest catchers the game has produced, when it came to signal work. He never allowed his pitcher to look towards a base, unless when throwing the ball. Snyder would give the signal to the pitcher in position to deliver the ball, but never until he had sized up the base-runner and had him working back to a base. Pitchers are apt to give too much attention to the base-runner and weaken their chances to get the man at bat. Snyder avoided this condition, and had his pitchers always in a position to let the ball go the instant that he gave the signal.

In throwing to first and third, to get a man napping, Snyder would give the signal one ball before he was to take the chance, giving time for all to be on the alert to back up.

The game has grown so full of moves that a clever man handling a team from the bench will be kept very busy, and must know the signals as well as the players. Managers should not labor under the impression that signals will avail if the ball players are absent. It takes clever men to work with the slight moves, and suggestions necessary for team work, for open signal work is very easily detected by your opponent, who will instantly turn his knowledge to his own advantage.

Signals, however, are positively necessary for a team's success in up-to-date base ball when team work is called for.

Signals cannot very well be made up according to a standard code. The ingenuity of the players must decide upon what is to be the sign of instruction. A wiggle of the finger, closing of the hand—concealed from the coaches of the opposite side by the catcher's mitt when the latter is giving his signal—a turn of the head, an apparent word of encouragement, all may have their hidden meaning. It is also well to change signals—or at least have a "cross" set ready in case of emergency, should the rival team succeed in interpreting the code. Some players have remarkable ability in putting two and two together, and the rest is easy.

A very instructive chapter on Signals will be found in Spalding's Athletic Library No. 229—"How to Catch."

SHORT TALKS ON A VARIETY OF BASE BALL TOPICS

BASE BALL GROUNDS

There is nothing more pleasing to the eye of a ball player than a fine ball park, with a level surface well kept.

Skin diamonds will do where nothing better can be found, but base ball must be played on a turf diamond to bring out all the beauties of the game.

The infielders must make plays on the dead run, and being often forced to time a ball between bounds, depend fully on the grounds being as smooth as a billiard table, as the least thing will throw a ball out of its true course, and only the real phenomena can play grounders on a rough surface. Here and there you will discover a player who will trap a ball between bounds in such a way that a rough surface is overcome. The average player, however, must have a smooth surface or show up badly at times. Nearly all of the hard drives to short and second are picked up on unturfed grounds, first and third alone being forced to face the hot shot as the ball comes off the grass.

Nine-tenths of the misplays made in the outfield on ground balls are the fault of the ground not being properly leveled and cared for.

PRELIMINARY TRAINING OF PLAYERS

The major league teams go south for early practice, while the minor league teams must work out at the home grounds. This is not so bad where the small leagues start the season quite late. The college teams usually work out in the gyms and cages before taking to the open fields.

The great danger in the spring is sore arms, and the greatest care should be taken in this respect. The players should jog about the bases until all soreness has gone, when they should practice sprinting, and give a great deal of time to starting and turning the bases.

Pitchers should work daily for some time before attempting to let out, and the catchers should be more cautious than the other players when throwing the ball.

When the men are in condition, extra speed should be tried and the development of team work practiced constantly until the men can make the play blindfolded, figuratively speaking.

The young pitchers should do the bulk of the boxwork in the cool spring weather, as the older pitchers should be allowed their own time to come around, as they know best when they are in winning form.

When ready for practice, keep a pitcher in the box to bat against, and spend at least one-half of the time in bunting and place hitting. No player ever got too much batting practice. It isn't necessary to smash away at the ball simply to get your

stick against the leather. Nine men out of ten who are successful in bunting the ball, or placing a pitched ball, grip the bat up short, as they have a better control, and more likely to meet the ball. Infielders should work with all the speed possible in practice, as this will show to advantage when in the games later on. Distances must be so well gauged that a player could make the play blindfolded, and this is brought about by speed practice.

The minor league players, handicapped by weather conditions, must be brought to the line by slow stages. Their one advantage is youth and players can stand most any kind of weather until they have encountered lame arms or strains of any kind.

NERVE COUNTS IN BASE BALL

One of the most essential qualities to a winning player's make up is nerve. Without nerve a ball player has little chance of winning a place among the stars of the profession. Although several have shown to good advantage as players, yet a lack of nerve at the time when it required staying prowess lost for these men the wholesome respect of the Base Ball fraternity, who admire nerve, perhaps more than brilliant playing qualities.

A player who will become rattled is an easy man to beat out, but just as soon as the discovery is made that a player has the nerve to go the distance, he is then passed up as one to be left alone. On the other hand, let it be whispered about that

a player lacks nerve, and he is sure to become a mark for his opponents, who will bother him in many ways and keep his attention off his work.

Men strengthen their nerves by playing together; often weak-hearted players will brace when blended with a nervy bunch, as the latter will see the advantage of encouraging their fellow-workmen, who has the ability, but not the fire, to be effective under trying situations.

Some ball players fairly shine when the situation is critical, and extra fine work is called for. They become cool under fire and plan their defence like magic. They have strong nerves and hearts that beat with the regulation of an old hall clock. Matched against this brand of ball player, what chance has a man with a fluttering heart and a nerve affected by every passing cloud?

To keep the nerve keyed up to its proper strength ball players must take care of their systems, by avoiding all dissipation, and not live the strenuous life. Those who start without the real nerve can never be expected to develop the favor, although association with the real thing will help considerably.

PLAYERS SHOULD KNOW THE RULES

It can be set down for a positive fact that less than one-half the professional ball players fully understand the playing rules.

Only a small majority of the ball players make any study of the rules, and are ever at a loss to

explain complicated plays and show surprise at the umpire's findings.

Usually all is left to the captain of the team, who is supposed to read up on the new rules each season and teach the men before the regular games begin.

The wise player will carefully read the rules and become thoroughly posted at all times, protecting his own game, and showing that he takes an interest in his business.

Many players who apply for umpire berths and feel competent to do well after being asked three or four offhand questions, have been forced to admit they had not learned their lesson before applying for the place, despite their actual playing experience.

There is no excuse for any player to say that the rules are too intricate and hard to understand. Each year in the Spalding Official Base Ball Guide a number of questions and answers on plays that arise in a game are printed. In addition, "Knotty Problems and How to Umpire," by Billy Evans, the well known umpire of the American League, is a book that gives numerous instances of legal and illegal plays. Umpire Evans' book is published in the Spalding Athletic Library series.

COLLIDING ON THE BALL FIELD

Team mates colliding on a ball field during a game is wholly unnecessary, and yet many games have been lost in this way, especially before large

crowds. During ordinary games, with little or no noise from cheering crowds, players can avoid all the trouble, by calling out, "I have it," when the fielders are after a fly ball. No player should call out until he is sure that he can reach the ball. Then when he does call out the other player or players running for the same fly should play to back up, and give the man who is after the ball a fair and open field. Once a fielder calls that he has it, he alone should pay attention to the ball, and he should make every effort to reach the ball knowing that he had a clear field.

Where large crowds attend the games, such as were present at the great world's championship series, the players should work with signals, as it is impossible to hear what players say. I would suggest that as soon as a player finds he can take the ball, that he stretch out his arms. This would not impede his speed and would be easily understood. In foot ball the player about to make a fair catch raises one hand above his head.

This signal would handicap a ball player at full speed, while throwing the hands wide apart is a natural move for a fielder about to pull down a fly ball.

Both the second baseman and the shortstop are supposed to dash into the outfield at full speed for every short fly ball, and the fact that they are running with their back to the plate forces the outfielders to allow them to try for many balls that would have been easy for the outfielders. In cases

of this kind all depends on the outfielder. If he calls out in time the infielder can stop. The trouble will come where the noise from the crowd prevents one player hearing the other. In this contingency the outfielder must protect the infielder by allowing the latter to make the play if possible; in fact, all depends on the outfielder.

DETERMINING AN INFIELD FLY.

“How do you determine an infield fly?” That question is asked time and again during the playing season, and equally often during the winter months.

“Is there any time when certain conditions play a determining part as to whether the effort of the batsman is an infield fly or not?” That is another question that is often put up for discussion by the fan, also the player. Some interesting conditions can arise relative to the second query.

Very often people get the impression that a ball must go a certain distance in the air, before the umpire makes up his mind that said effort comes under the classification of an infield fly. Other people are of the impression that a fly ball must be actually handled by an infielder, before it can come under said classification. Both impressions are entirely erroneous, as are many others concerning the infield fly, which, by the way, never fails to stir up considerable agitation during the playing season.

An infield fly is just exactly what the Spalding Official Base Ball Guide says it is, “any fly ball other

than a line drive that can be handled by an infielder." That section puts it entirely up to the umpire's judgment. Therefore, when the batsman, with men on first and second, or first, second and third, hits a fly ball, and less than two men are out, it instantly becomes the duty of the umpire to decide whether or not he believes the ball can be handled by an infielder. Most umpires always believe it a wise move to reach a quick decision, because the base-runner seeks protection at once, and he looks for advice from the umpire as to his definition of the hit. Once he makes his ruling he must go through with it. His decision makes the effort an infield fly and retires the batsman, even though no infielder handles the ball, even though an outfielder attempts to do so.

There is just one situation where the umpire should use great care as to his ruling on the infield fly. Such a situation comes with runners on first and second, and it becomes the duty of the batsman to attempt to move both runners up a base through the medium of a sacrifice, in other words, a bunt. The infield when expecting such a play resort to strategy to take care of all situations that may arise. At the start of the delivery the entire infield is in motion. It becomes the duty of the third baseman to cover that sack, in case there is a chance for a force at that base. The shortstop moves over to take care of any play at second, while the second baseman rushes over to cover first. It becomes the duty of the pitcher to

handle all bunts down the third base way, while the first baseman takes care of all in his direction.

Major league umpires exercise great care in such a crisis. Bunted fly balls that under ordinary conditions might be construed as infield flies are not so regarded. It is deemed wise to make the infielders handle any kind of a batted ball with such conditions existing. This because the entire infield is in motion on the play, making it absolutely impossible to handle some plays that come up, which under ordinary conditions would be an easy out.

This play is a source of constant trouble in the minors and with amateurs, where the umpires fail to take into consideration the conditions, rule the hit an infield fly and very often the ball drops to the ground without any one even coming close to making a play on it.

THE MEANING OF ACTUALLY HOLDING THE BALL

In base ball, retaining possession of the ball, without having said ball touch the ground, is considered holding the ball. If an outfielder gets under a fly ball, has it strike his hands and then bound out several times, but finally securely holding it, it is considered a fair and proper catch. If a ball is thrown to a baseman and bounds out several times, but is finally caught without having come into contact with the ground in any way, it is considered held.

On the proper interpretation of the word "held"

depends the correct interpretation of a rule which has caused considerable comment among the leading umpires of the country.

For illustration, we will say there is a runner on third base and he attempts a steal of home. He starts a bit too soon, the pitcher divines his intent, steps off the rubber and throws the ball to the catcher. It seems certain that the runner is going to be caught ten feet. The runner realizes that his chances are extremely slim to reach the plate, makes up his mind that his only chance depends upon a hard slide, in the hope that the catcher in the collision might drop the ball. The catcher puts the ball on the runner several yards in front of the home plate and, as the runner had hoped, the force of the collision knocked the ball out of the catcher's hands into the air. The catcher recovered the ball before it touched the ground, but in the meantime the runner had slid safely over the plate.

Of course, the question that arises is, Did the man score or is the runner out? The run did not score, the man who attempted the steal of home was out at the plate. Offhand, you may not be able to see the situation in that light; you might say, "How so? The catcher did not hold the ball at the time of the touch." That is all very true, but the fact remains that the catcher did not drop the ball, figuring on the generally accepted definition of "held," from a base ball standpoint.

Section 9 of Rule 36 is the point involved. That section, which relates to when base-runners are out, reads: "The base runner is out, if at any time while the ball is in play, he be touched by the ball in the hands of a fielder, unless some part of his person be touching the base he is entitled to occupy. Provided, however, that the ball be held by the fielder after touching him, unless the base-runner deliberately knock it out of his hand."

In the case cited, where the catcher put the ball on the runner several yards in front of the home plate, although the ball was juggled for the time being, he held it; therefore the runner was out. It seems to be the impression of a great many that when a fielder puts the ball on a runner he must hold it at the time of contact. Such, of course, is not the case. If one simply remembers that held is considered meaning retaining possession of the ball, without the same coming into contact with the ground or being caught in the uniform of the player, it would all be very easy.

TEMPERAMENT A FACTOR

From the New York Sun

The following article on what constitutes a successful ball player enters into the subject from the usual standard of playing ability alone:

The more one sees of base ball the more convincing it is that the leading difference between a big league player and a minor leaguer is temperament or mentality. Few ball players are capable of developing into Cobbs or Speakers. Base ball produces its geniuses, the same as music, the arts or professions. But there are many ball players of exceptional ability in the country who could play big league ball if they could only forget they were in the major leagues.

Some managers, among them John McGraw, say a hitter must be born and that no man can be taught how to bat unless the instinct is with him. There are a few cases where poor minor league hitters taught themselves how to hit. Milan of Washington and Archer of the Cubs were examples. However, managers will say a player like Milan always had the batting instinct, as no batting practice could have brought out the natural knack of hitting a ball unless it already was there.

All of which strengthens the argument that a player must have big league mentality to remain in the big leagues.

All good hitters in base ball are not in the major leagues. You will find them scattered through the

minors, in the county leagues, semi-pro fields and even in the amateur ranks—players who have every physical requirement, who stand out among their fellows like so many Speakers and who unquestionably have what players call the knack of “busting the apple.” But lift such players out of their surroundings and they are lost. They act like a fish in a strange pond. At the same time the ability is there.

A fan in Macon recently started a discussion by the statement: “I travel around a good bit and see many big league games in the North, and I have tried to discover where the big league ball differs so much from the minor league ball—even such ball as we have down here.

“They play the same game, the sacrifice, the hit-and-run; our pitchers try to outguess the batters and vice versa; we have great catches and spectacular stops, and each club has one or two players who always cause a thrill when at bat. And should our pitcher strike out such a batter we are as pleased about it as when one of your Northern pitchers strikes out a man like Cobb, Speaker or Collins.”

“The best players of course are in the big leagues,” says Bobbie Gilks, the well-known scout, “but temperament keeps back a lot of fine ball players. Some players we recommend do much better than expected. Others, who often look much better in the minors, fail dismally.”

The big league temperament applies just as

much to fielding and pitching as to batting—perhaps more so. There never were more than eight or possibly ten real able shortstops in the big leagues. And how many fans have seen players in small minor leagues or on semi-professional fields go far to their left for balls or knock them down over second base in true Fletcher or Maranville fashion.

Shortstops who have been regarded as wizards in the colleges or minors sometimes kick everything that comes their way as soon as they are promoted to the majors, and cannot cover the ground they stood on. But once back in their own company they again are the same stars as before.

The minors are full of such fielders and pitchers. Scouts never notice them. If you ask about them, it is the same story: "Yes, I know about Bill or Jake. He is a great minor league player, and that lets him out."

These players have been up once, twice and even three times, only to be bloomers each time. Even at the training camp they looked like sure winners, but as soon as they were put in a big league game they blew right apart, and you read about "another exploded phenom."

Base ball men say such players lack confidence, which unquestionably is true, but that lack of confidence expresses a minor league base ball mentality. Such a player does not believe in himself, and as soon as he is thrown in contact with the game's leading stars he is thrown into a mental panic, and his game naturally suffers.

WHEN NOT TO HIT THE BALL

“Won by Waiting” was the title of a popular novel published some years ago, and it would have made an equally applicable heading for the present chapter.

Not all think alike as to some of the minor details of base ball, no matter how essential it may be that the general intent and scheme of the game be somewhat uniform in play and purpose. James Crusinberry, a base ball writer of reputation in Chicago, in a recent article throws some light on the methods of Fred Mitchell, formerly manager of the Chicago National League Club, and now, in addition, president of that organization. Mr. Crusinberry says:

“Several years ago, the base ball teams of two big Eastern universities were battling in the final game of the season to decide the championship. One team was coached by a man who had served in the major leagues as a professional player, and the other was led by a man whose only experience in the national game had been with a college team. In spite of the fact that the team coached by the college man was the stronger, the championship was won by the team led by the former professional player. The game was won only by superior generalship.

“The team with the college-trained coach had a pitcher noted for his wonderful speed and tre-

mendous curve, who had been striking out from fifteen to twenty collegians in all of his games. The professional coach knew that his only chance to win was to wear out the big pitcher; so he planned his method of play with that end in view, from the very first inning. He ordered all his batsmen to make the big fellow work by trying, in each case, to get the call of three and two before swinging at a ball.

“The game dragged along, under that plan, until, by the time the ninth inning arrived, the college coach's team had the score in its favor by a count of 1 to 0. After two men were out, one batsman on the other side succeeded in getting a two-base hit. At least eighteen men had been struck out and the big pitcher was trying to fan every man who faced him.

“When the two-base hit occurred, the professional coach grabbed the next batter by the arm and said:

“‘Now, old man, remember you are the winning run. You have to get on first base in order to score. Don't you attempt to swing at anything until after two strikes are called, and then you make that big guy pitch before you offer to hit.’

“The batsman followed orders, and with the call three and two, he took one barely below the knees for a fourth ball and walked to first base.

“Immediately the professional coach grabbed the next batter and gave him the same sort of instruction.

“ ‘That big fellow is worried and tired,’ he said. ‘You make him pitch; keep your bat on your shoulder as long as possible.’

“The result was that another batsman walked, filling the bases; and the big pitcher sure was worried. Again the professional coach grabbed the coming batter and shaking his finger under the young fellow’s nose, said:

“ ‘If you try to hit a ball before two strikes are called on you, I’ll hit you right in the jaw.’

“The big pitcher, in great distress, seemed to think his only chance to save the game was to strike out the batter; so he immediately started work with all the ‘stuff’ he possessed. The first ball he pitched was a curve that hit the ground and skipped past the catcher, allowing the man on third to get home with the tying run. Then the slab star, who had fanned more batters than any collegian in the East, blew all to pieces. If his life had depended upon it, he couldn’t have got a ball over the plate. He walked the next two batters and forced in the winning run, ending the game.

“When it was all over, one of the professors of the school where the old professional player was coach came to the dressing room and shook hands with all the boys and the coach as well; but when he shook hands with the coach, he said:

“ ‘I’m awfully glad you won the game, but I didn’t like the way you won it. It didn’t seem sportsmanlike. I wish one of the boys had hit that ball to the fence, and won the day that way.’

“The coach smiled; but he couldn't resist giving an answer about like this:

“ ‘Professor, you may know a lot about Greek and Latin, but you don't know much about base ball.’

“The professional player who is the hero of this incident is none other than Fred Mitchell, manager of the Chicago Cubs. He uses the very same method of play in the National League pennant race that he used in trying to lead that team of collegians to a championship. Although his system, which is one of percentages, was new to a lot of the players on the Cub team, they soon absorbed it. Mitchell is convinced that such a system is the only way possible for a bad team to beat a good one. Accordingly, he doesn't worry greatly, with the system in operation, over the fact that he has a rather weak-hitting team and only one or two men who are speedy and alert on the bases. What he wants is a player who has, first, enough gray matter to learn the system, and, second, enough wits to follow it in a game of ball.

“Before he accepted the position of manager for the Cubs, Mitchell was assistant to George Stallings in leading the Boston Braves. Much of the success of that team is due to Mitchell and his system. Stallings is a great leader of men, but it is doubtful if he could have pulled the Braves from a tailend position to a world's championship, if he hadn't had Mitchell by his side to teach the

system and a squad of players with brains enough to follow it.

“The general impression among base ball fans is that games are won by hitting the ball. This system of play introduced by Mitchell seems, however, to prove just the opposite. He won the college game, you remember, by demanding that his players *refrain* from hitting the ball. According to the old-time method, the batter should have tried to hit the ball to the fence as soon as that one man got on second base. But the percentages of base ball show that it takes a good sticker to turn the trick of hitting to the fence once in four or five trials. If the college batsman had tried to make a big hit, it would have been about a 5 to 1 shot that he would not have succeeded. It is more than likely that he would have popped one up in the air—and the game would have ended with the tying run left on second base. By ordering his men to lay off the ball until after two strikes had been called, Mitchell knew that the pitcher was bound to be weakened a little and lose some of his stuff, thereby not only giving the batsman a better chance of hitting the ball hard, if it became necessary to hit, but at the same time giving him a chance to draw a base on balls. A pitcher can't get very tired from pitching if all the batters hit the first ball; but if the batter keeps his bat on his shoulder until two strikes are called, the hurler will have to pitch about six times to each batsman instead of once. Moreover, since no one can get a base on balls by hitting the first ball pitched, and

since his chances of reaching first base alive by hitting the first ball are only about one in four, Mitchell's holding-back policy can't help but pay in the end.

“The Mitchell system isn't exactly new, though it is just a bit different from any employed in the past. Fielder Jones used about the same method away back in 1906, when he won a world's championship with the White Sox, a team which, though the weakest in the major leagues in batting, was composed of brainy fellows who knew the art of wearing out an opposing pitcher and winning a game of ball on two or three base-hits. In order to follow such a system of play, the .350 batter who knows little else except how to drive the ball to the fence is less desirable than the .250 batter who, instead of being fussed after two strikes have been called on him, still possesses his wits and ability to make the pitcher work.

“While the Cubs were training on the Pacific Coast for the coming National League season, Mitchell was laboring with his men daily, trying to get them to absorb his system. One day when they were engaged in an exhibition game of ball against the San Francisco team, I saw him give one of his players a severe calling for making a two-base hit to the fence. It was late in the game and one run was needed to win. Runners were on first and third with two out, and Mitchell figured on turning the double steal for the winning run. The pitcher served a ‘cripple’ to the batter—a nice

easy one right in the groove, and the batter forgot all about the system and took a full swing. He happened to meet the ball squarely, and drove it to the fence for two bases, sending both base-runners home. He was not a little surprised, after the game, when, instead of being patted on the back for his feat, he was reprimanded by the manager and told that if that play had occurred in a regular game of ball he would have been fined.

“ ‘But he handed me a “cripple,” ’ said the player, ‘and I knew I could kill it.’

“ ‘That’s no way to figure,’ answered Mitchell. ‘Even with a “cripple,” your chance of making a base-hit there was about one in four. You would have felt fine if you had popped it up or even hit a liner right into someone’s hands.’

“While the general idea of the system is to refrain from swinging at the ball, there are times when just the opposite is the rule; otherwise the opposing pitchers would soon be wise, and would buzz the first two right over the middle, getting the batsman in the hole. In order to make the system a success, someone must cross the pitcher every little while and take a full swing at the first ball. When it is seen that the hurler is laying the first one over, in the belief that the batter will take it, the batter is instructed to take a toe-hold and hit with all his might at the ball, no matter where it is. Then the pitcher is up in the air again and doesn’t know what to do. The scheme of the system is to make the pitcher work—to make him

pitch as many times as possible, because no pitcher can go out and pitch about two hundred times in a game without getting somewhat tired and losing a little of his stuff.

“One of the best players in the game to follow instructions and carry out a prescribed form of play is Larry Doyle. Though Doyle has hit over the .300 mark a few times and led the league one year in batting, he really is about a .280 hitter. He is the kind of batter, however, who is not fussed when two strikes are called, but is able to hit the ball just the same and keep on worrying the pitcher.

“One reason Mitchell's system proved a success in Boston was that there were three or four players among the Braves with brains enough to absorb it and follow it through to the finish. One of them was ‘Rabbit’ Maranville. Though a great defensive player, as every one knows, he has never been much of a batsman, yet he was a central figure in carrying out the system of getting runs—and if one looks back over the scores of the Boston team for the last three years, he will find that they were getting two and three runs on an average of five or six hits, and three and four runs on about seven hits. ‘Red’ Smith, who played third for the Braves, was really a weak hitter, but he, too, fitted in with the system. Johnny Evers, of course, was one of the main cogs in the machine and one of the greatest batters in the league for bothering a pitcher, yet Evers never was a leading batsman.

Seldom in his career has he finished a season with an average of .300. According to the system, it isn't the stars who win pennants, but the method of play. When one remembers how the Boston Braves came from the tailend position in 1914 and finished with the world's championship pennant in their possession, one feels that maybe there is something in that method.

"Base ball is pretty much like any other activity. No one can succeed in it by skill alone. He has to have a good thinking apparatus behind his hands if he is to amount to anything. Many managers and coaches haven't yet awakened to this fact. When they do the national game will be the better for it."

Not all base ball managers can or are likely to be given an opportunity similar to that which Mitchell enjoyed, but all can gather the theory of his method and perhaps improve their own methods by an analysis of his. There is no fixed practice in base ball. It would be absurd to attempt to play the game by a never varying system of attack. On the other hand, there comes to be in the course of time a "style" in base ball which the expert critic learns to distinguish. McGraw has a general policy of his own which carries fear to his rivals and he is likely at any moment to vary it by methods opposite and entirely at variance with those he had pursued, resulting in the complete undoing of his opponents.

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